



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: Fol/Req/21/022

Date 15/02/2020

Dear Mr Deegan,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

'The total amount spent by the Dept of Foreign Affairs on capital/refurbishment works on the country's network of embassies in 2019.

A breakdown in the costs of the refurbishment works at the top five embassies where the capital/refurbishment costs were highest in 2019.

The total amount spent by the Dept of Foreign Affairs on capital/refurbishment works on the country's network of embassies in 2020.

A breakdown in the costs of the refurbishment works at the top five embassies where the capital/refurbishment costs were highest in 2020. '

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request, which was sent to you on 25 January 2020.

The Embassy network worldwide is used by the Department and state agencies in pursuit of its strategic goals on behalf of the State. The network provide a platform for our Missions to promote Ireland's political, economic and cultural interests and values, provide services to our citizens, develop strategic stakeholder relationships and represent Ireland in international organisations.

The Department must ensure that its buildings meet security and health and safety standards, as well as providing universal access facilities as part of our duty of care to staff, users and visitors to our buildings. The Department, in addition, must comply with any additional national standards/requirements in local jurisdiction obligations.

All refurbishment at Embassies are conducted in line with the Department's procurement obligations under Government public tendering and contracting rules, including both National and EU Public Procurement thresholds.

I have identified 4 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the attached schedule. I have made a decision to grant 2 and part-grant 2 of the records.

The two records that have been part granted, records 2 and 4, have had information redacted as per section 36 (1) (b) - Commercially Sensitive Information.

The redactions relate to commercial information where disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information related or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of her/his profession/business/occupation. The redactions are projects which are ongoing and active and it may be possible to ascertain payments to a

particular supplier still contracted by the Department which may undermine their competitiveness in other competitive processes. I have considered the public interest in releasing this information as the public have an interest in how the Department spends taxpayer's funds. However, on balance, I believe that the public interest is best served by not disclosing commercial information at this time where it could prejudice the competitive position of the Department or supplier. The Department is open to considering granting access to this record on conclusion of these projects.

Record 1. Total expenditure on refurbishment works by The Department of Foreign Affairs on our Embassy network in 2019 amounted to €7,569,367.61

Record 2 relating to the breakdown of refurbishment/capital costs in 2019 are as follows:

Property 2 relates to the replacement of the roof at the Embassy of Ireland in London. These works were required under the terms of the lease. Refurbishment of the promotional and representational areas and the expansion of the number of workspaces available to the Embassy with associated upgrading of electrical and ICT infrastructure was carried out.

Property 4 relates to the necessary relocation of the Ireland House in Hungary. This property provides space for both the mission and Enterprise Ireland. This has resulted in a modern promotional and event facility for Irish citizens, business and cultural events and in an improvement working environment for staff.

Property 5 relates to the Chancery/Official Accommodation in Paris. Works were carried out through air conditioning works, security upgrades, fire and health and safety improvements and maintenance in order to improve a State asset as a location for the promotion of Ireland's interests and values in France.

Record 3. Total expenditure on refurbishment works by The Department of Foreign Affairs on our Embassy network in 2020 amounted to €4,161,644.09.

Record 4 relating to the breakdown of refurbishment/capital costs in 2020 are as follows:

Property 3 relates to the established of the new Consulate General of Ireland office in Mumbai, India. The decision to open this office was taken by Government as part of the Global Ireland 2025 initiative. The office will be the base for the promotion and representation of Ireland's values and interests in Mumbai and India. This is an Ireland House operated with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland. It will also provide consular assistance, consular services and emergency assistance to Irish citizens. These works were necessary to provide a safe, secure working environment for staff in order to expand Ireland's presence and improve its visibility in India's commercial capital.

Property 4 relates to established of the new Embassy of Ireland to Chile

The decision to open an Embassy in Santiago de Chile was taken by Government as part of the Global Ireland 2025 initiative. The office and promotional event space will support the Department's objectives of working to expand trade and investment opportunities with Chile, serving Irish citizens and diaspora in the region and promoting and representation of Ireland's values and interests.

Property 5 relates to refurbishment work at The Consulate General of Ireland in New York.


This work focused on improving promotional and event facilities for Irish citizens, diaspora, business and cultural events and improving the working environment for staff. The promotional and event space is used not only by the Consulate but by the co-located state agencies in the shared Ireland House in New York for a wide variety of conferences, cultural and economic events and business launches throughout the calendar year, thus saving the cost of renting similar space for such events, which can be very expensive. The Consulate also provides the event space to partner organisations- whether

cultural, community or business focused- that service the Irish community in New York, leveraging the space to increase the Consulate's outreach and further the Department's high level goals in tandem with these organisations.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082857. You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "KEVIN CARR". The letters are in all caps and have a slightly cursive, informal style.

Kevin Carr